

October 16, 2007

Dear BLM,

Our old growth forests are an integral part of what America is.

I am appalled at your agency's stated intention to desecrate this heritage by pursuing the direction in which the Bush Administration is headed with the management of nearly 2.6 million acres of Oregon's federal forests under the Western Oregon Plan Revisions. I am concerned that the changes your agency is contemplating will unravel the protections of the landmark Northwest Forest Plan, lead to water pollution, degraded habitat, and serious diminishment of our natural legacy to future generations of Oregonians in particular and Americans in general.

The Bush Administration's preferred alternative proposes to clear-cut 140,000 acres of Oregon's old-growth every decade, build 1,000 miles of new logging roads, and create over 100,000 miles of new Off Highway Vehicle Emphasis Areas—all at the expense of roadless areas, threatened species, water quality and non-motorized recreation.

I want my federal land managers to embrace thinning second growth forests, safeguard communities from wildfire and protect what remains of our nation's ancient forests. Many Oregon forest managers are already moving in this new and very viable direction. By focusing on previously logged public forestlands - many of which are now overgrown and in need of thinning - they are providing wood to local mills while actually improving conditions for fish and wildlife and keeping saws out of precious old-growth forests.

In contrast, the WOPR proposes increasing old-growth clear-cutting for a short-term economic fix. The WOPR puts water quality at-risk and would destroy some of Oregon's most special places. We should protect our remaining mature and old-growth forests on public land, not clear-cut these natural treasures as the WOPR proposes to do.

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I thought it was the purpose of the BLM to protect all of the values inherent in our national forest lands. The WOPR will enhance timber production and mechanized off-road recreation, but will all but eliminate the many other economic, recreational and heritage values remaining in the 15% still standing of our once-mighty forests.

Please don't pursue this planned action. Instead, please protect our remaining old-growth forests, focus active management of BLM lands in already logged-over areas, and concentrate job opportunities in restoration thinning projects that benefit watersheds and generate wood products without eradicating one of the most significant parts of America's natural heritage.

Sincerely,

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